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SIN COMPARED TO DISEASE.

SIN is often compared in the Scriptures to a disease, and the recovering from sin is represented under the image of healing. My intention in this essay is to carry out this comparison to some points of useful religious meditation. Before going into the proposed detail, we may observe, in general, that sin and disease resemble each other in some respects in the relation which they bear to our nature. Our nature is liable to both, but it was made, as its end, for neither. Nor was the soul made sinful, any more than the body was made sick. As their natural and perfect condition, our bodies were made for health, and our souls were made for virtue. Sin brings disorder into the moral constitution, as truly as disease brings disorder into the physical constitution, of our being.

Again ; there is in our bodies a fine and beautiful organization, an exquisite adjustment of one part to another, which disease deranges. So does sin derange the moral system. It disturbs the healthful order of the affections. It pushes some of them to excess and goads them to fever, while others are struck with the chill of death. They flow in their wonted channels perhaps, but with irregular and intermittent action ; not with the calm and even pulsations of vigorous life. Like obstructions in the bodily organs, like the inroads of disease

upon the nerves and senses, like the jars of nervous irritability, like the film that dims the eye, or the heaviness that settles upon the ear, or the clog that weighs upon the limbs and fetters every muscular power, such is sin to the soul ; it brings obstruction and pain, darkness and disorder and ruin, upon the whole moral constitution of our nature.

The various forms of the moral disease, also, answer to the varieties of physical disease. There is the moral fever—the passion inflamed with pursuit, when all healthful moral aliment and all the powers of the soul are converted into one raging and consuming desire. Again, there is a stupor in the soul—the moral paralysis. The mind is insensible to the calls of conscience and religion ; it scarcely feels the pain or even the consciousness of rejecting them, so deep is the lethargy ; it hears, but does not understand ; it sees, but does not perceive ; it has but a dull, benumbed and half-conscious sense of any thing that spiritually concerns it ; that, I repeat, is the fearful moral paralysis—from which the soul must be aroused, or it will soon sink to utter perdition. There is the moral delirium. There is a mind which fancies it is well, when it is sick almost unto death ; which, although surrounded with signs of moral ruin, and an object of pity to every beholder, yet shocks the ear of every thoughtful spectator with its insane and boisterous merriment ; which, though essentially poor and miserable and destitute, yet thinks itself and would have others think it, rich and fortunate, increased in goods, and full of goodly prospects. Many such are around us, morally insane, or palsied in every moral faculty, or burning with the fever of the passions. And many more are there who are suffering in all the intermediate stages of moral disease. The variety of cases, indeed, is such that no limit can be set to it, and no description within the range of our present reflections, can do it any justice.

Let us, however, attempt to bring before our minds this unhappy condition in which the world is suffering, under some other and more detailed points of comparison.

Sin, let us observe then, is like disease in its origin, i. e. in its causes, its commencement ;—in its progress ;—in its effects ;—in its remedies ;—and in the process of cure.

It is like disease in its origin—in its causes and its commencement. There is a liability to both these evils, we have already said, in our nature : there is a liability, and that, perhaps, is all that we can say of what our nature does to create in us either disease or sin. But when we pass beyond this general and primary account of the matter, we come to distinct causes, to causes for which men are responsible. Of disease, the world, and the civilized world especially, is full of causes which are artificial, which are originated by man, by modes of dress and of living, by processes of cookery and distillation, and by those habits of mind, those cares, anxieties and sorrows which are superinduced by an artificial state of society. How much there is that is wrong in the whole fabric and plan of civilized life among us, in its very nurture and economy from the first step of our existence to the last—how much is wrong in all this, is a question which no reformer, as I apprehend, has yet sounded to its depths. We are a race far more weak and sickly than the savages, far more so than our British ancestors, far more so than the elder tribes of every nation ; we are such now by our very constitution, and our children are doomed to be such after us, and when or how the evil is to be remedied, it is not easy to see. But be this as it may, such, or similar at least, are the causes of sin. They lie, many of them certainly, in circumstances, in the very foundations of society, in a wrong education, in prevailing false maxims, in artificial temptations, in the whole economy and in the very atmosphere of civilized life. Much occasion as there is to be disheartened at the wrong which men intentionally and wilfully do, there is still more cause to despair of remedying the evil which they do unconsciously ; the evil which they do in business, in conversation, in the scenes of recreation, and never call it evil, because all along, for years and through generations, the world has been going on in the same way.

The operation of these causes is often imperceptible ; and so it is that sin in the heart, like disease in the body, takes its origin, it is scarcely possible to tell when or where, or in what manner. It steals into the mind like the infectious breath of a

tainted atmosphere. As a man walketh forth amidst the evening damps, and unconsciously draweth from some noxious exhalation the seeds of a disease that is yet to destroy him ; so doth he walk forth in the presence of evil moral influences, perchance at the same hour of eventide, and from the surrounding atmosphere of bad example, from the poisonous breath of evil communings, are engendered those vague impressions, those low and licentious ideas, those guilty thoughts, whose fruit is death. If we look to have disease or sin present itself before us in some definite and alarming aspect at its first assault, we shall be greatly mistaken. When a disorder has become fever or consumption, it has indeed taken a distinct form, but it has then advanced far from its first secret lodgment in the system. And when the moral disorder has become intemperance or avarice, it has taken many fatal steps from its first imperceptible beginnings. Therefore the truest wisdom is prevention. It is to guard, with the strictest prudence, with habitual watch and care, all the avenues through which evil enters.

The *progress* of sin too is like that of disease. Sometimes it is imperceptible. The man has become worse and worse, more selfish, self-indulgent, passionate, proud, sensual and corrupt ; low purposes and mean thoughts have usurped the place of high and pure sentiments ; but all this has taken place so gradually, that he is but half conscious of the change that has passed upon him, and like many a man in declining health, he will not admit that he is sick, and that his soul needeth to be healed. But the progress of sin is sometimes more visibly marked ; its character is more distinct, and its symptoms more definite. It is like a fever or plague ; it seizes its victim as with the fury of a demon, and hurries him to swift destruction. Again, and this is perhaps the most common case,—it is fluctuating. How often, in sickness, is the patient reported to be one day better, and another day worse ; now the symptoms are more encouraging, and then they are more alarming. So it is often with the course of the transgressor. At one time his case appears very dark and discouraging. His evil habits

gain strength, and for a time hold irresistible sway over him. But now in the midst of this terrible career, it is very likely that there will be a temporary reform, and his friends will say there is hope of his recovery. Oh! those hopes of moral recovery—how do they encourage and disappoint, allure and blight the affections of anxious and watchful friendship! And thus will the man hold on his irregular and troubled course; ever growing worse, though sometimes seeming better—ever growing worse and worse; weaker to resist evil and more impatient after every temporary self-denial to plunge into new indulgences; till, at last, if he repent not, he will arrive at that dreadful condition when hope is extinguished, when the body and the soul together are sinking into ruins.

Again, the *effects* of disease may illustrate the effects of sin. Disease prostrates the system, lets down the tone of useful and vigorous action at every step, enfeebles every limb and sense and physical faculty, and ultimately makes of the man a child, causes him to be timid, irresolute, faltering, disheartened, and finally brings him to that state when his life is a grievance to himself, and a grief to others. What one of these effects is not emblematic of some portion of the experience of every moral offender? Does not sin, in every form, whether of excess or defect, of violence or indolence—does it not tend to prostrate the energies of its victim? Is it not ever hasting to bring about that result, in which a man is a curse to himself and others? Does it not almost invariably bring feebleness, timidity and irresolution into the soul?

Perhaps it will be said that it does not immediately. Neither does that process by which disease is consummated, give any such tokens, in its earlier stages, of its destructive tendency. The effects, the visible and sensible effects, at least, often lie at a considerable distance from the causes. The dyspeptic patient often feels better for free living, to-day; but he will feel worse next week. And so it is true that that course of sensual and selfish indulgence, which is an offence alike against medicine and morality, and with which some set out in the career of life, has sometimes, for a season, no visibly bad

effect. The youthful offender flourishes as the green bay-tree. There are health and high spirits; there is something that seems very like happiness; and the poor victim rejoices in his heart, and is persuaded that his is a very good way to live in. ‘Your strict, solemn, over-virtuous people, he is very sorry for. No spirit! no life! no courage!—they dare not be happy.’ Ah! how differently will tell a few years’ experience of a dissolute course! Whose *then* will be the spirit, the life, the courage? Will they be his, who wakes up stupid, sullen, peevish, pale, and paralyzed, from the last night’s debauch? Will they be his, whose soul and body have together become diseased and broken down? Will they be his, who stands a wreck of life, upon the borders of the grave?

Let us pass now to consider the *remedies* of disease, whether it be physical or moral. And the comparison will be sufficiently understood, when we say, that for the cure of moral diseases, no nostrums, no panaceas, are to be relied on. Nothing is safe but a course of wholesome, judicious, careful treatment. The moral, as well as the medical patient, is to feel that if he tampers with his disease, he is very likely never to get well. He is not to let the disorder of his soul run on, under a notion that he may by and bye apply some grand prescription of spiritual quackery, and all will be sound and strong again.

The wish has perhaps occurred to every one in sickness and pain,—the idea at least has occurred, that there might have been some grand restorative, some elixir, some fountain opened, which would, at a single draught, have healed every wound, assuaged every pain, and cured every raging disease. But an instant’s reflection must have showed us, that such a provision, so apparently gracious at first view, would be the most fatal of all evils. It would be, for it would enable men to dispense with all that wholesome care and moderation which are so necessary to the order and virtue of society. So must we regard all moral specifics of quick and sovereign efficacy for saving the people from the power, and pain, and threatened destruction of sin. No doubt, great cures will be talked of

under this extravagant system of practice, and sometimes, by the force of imagination and of circumstances, great cures will be effected. Much more will be made of them than of ordinary cases of healing ; statements and names will be published, to prove the efficacy of the extraordinary remedies invented for the cure of the soul and to induce others to take them ; there will be much excitement about the new measures for spiritual healing ; but all this while, the moral health of the people will suffer. Just so far as they rely upon spiritual nostrums and specifics, will they neglect the habitual care of themselves. Just so often as they resort to these methods of sudden and extraordinary practice, will they be superficially dealt with, imperfectly cured, and ultimately injured.

No, *the process of recovery from sin* is slow. Such is all healing of chronic diseases—i. e. of diseases of long standing, which are fixed in the constitution : and sin is a chronic disease. There are indeed sudden disorders in the moral constitution, which may be speedily healed. Some passion may be urged to fever, and hurried to indulgence ; and discovery may bring about a crisis, or the strength of the moral nature may interpose an effectual check ; and in a few days there may be a complete recovery. But not so with that diseased state of the soul, that moral debility, which has been brought on by a long course of sinful indulgence or sinful neglect. From that state a man must rise by little and little, by a regular, patient, daily care and prudence, by a constant and persevering repetition of little attentions, or by fixed and almost insensible habits, and not by any notable and grand practice. It is not so much the power of medicine, then, however judiciously applied, that is to recover the constitution, as it is a strict regimen and healthful exercise.

I say, regimen. Nothing, perhaps, better illustrates the spiritual care of ourselves which is necessary, than what in medical practice is commonly called *dieting*. There is nothing in the physical care, which is more difficult than this, or in which so many patients utterly fail. They can do some great thing, they can go abroad on journeys for health, they

can be much excited about the matter and sigh to be well, they can apply to a physician, they can take medicine, they can use all the resources of the most extravagant practice, be it steaming or cauterizing, drenching with flood or burning with fire ; *but they cannot use a little moderation !* for that will take a long time, and require a great deal of care : and a hundred patients will fail here, where one will fail in any other point. Moderation, restraint, dieting !—many abhor the very idea of it ; and had rather die than diet ; and they will die, for the want of nothing but prudence. So it is in the moral course. Protracted, perpetual self-restraint is the only cure for multitudes ; and yet they will do any thing—attend meetings, rush into excitements, make much ado, use prescriptions, seek counsel only to resist it, and after all suffer tortures and vent groans of remorse—any thing will they submit to but sober, strict, daily, hourly self-denial. And yet this is the only way in which they can be saved : and they who rely upon any other means are not saved. They are only, to use the physician's phrase, patched up for a time ; the moral disease is only held in occasional check ; and though they may be called Christians, and may have a standing in the church, they go on weak, inefficient, halting, now better and now worse, now recovering and then falling, to their dying day.

I say, again, that for moral healing there must be a regular and constant exercise of the moral faculties. It is not enough to submit to a *certain course* of moral treatment. Many are willing to do that. They are willing to go to church and passively to listen ; they are willing to read a book about the spiritual discipline, and they hope that it will do them good. But it will not do them good ; and nothing will do them good, unless they put their moral powers to vigorous exercise. The feeble limb, the debilitated body must gain strength by exercise ; and so must the feeble conscience, and the debilitated soul. Nature must work with the physician, or all is in vain ; and so must nature work with the spiritual Restorer, even though that restorer be the Savior of men, or all is equally in vain.

This point cannot be too much insisted on. He who would be a good man must—pardon the freedom of the phrase—must set about it. He has talked long enough about what he would be—let him *do* something. Let him do the first thing that presents itself as a duty—and the second thing—and every thing that his conscience bids him do. I repeat it, let him do something. I leave the subject with this direction, for none more weighty can be given—the whole burden of Scripture exhortation lies upon it—*let him do something!*

O. D.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

We gaze o'er the waves with a joyous emotion,
Beholding the lighthouse that shines from afar,
As through the calm eve, o'er the slumbering ocean,
It sends forth its beams like a heaven-lighted star !

Thus, in moments of bliss, and the calm hour of feeling,
When our joys know no cloud, and our passions no strife;
Heaven shines round our path, future pleasures revealing,
And Hope sweetly smiles o'er the ocean of life !

And there, when the tempest in fury is lashing
O'er bleak rocks and sand-bars the foam-crested wave,
That lighthouse still stands, where the wild waves are dashing,
And kindles its beacon to warn and to save !

Oh, thus does kind heaven in mercy befriend us,
And sends forth its beams in affliction's dark night.
When no mortal power its succor can lend us,
The love of our God sheds unquenchable light !

R. C. W.

THE late Dr. Thomas Arnold of Oxford, in the momentary intervals between the paroxysms of an agonizing disease, just before he died, said repeatedly and with perfect composure, “I thank God for pain.”

A DIFFICULTY CONCERNING FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

THAT forgiveness of sin is one of the leading doctrines of the new covenant, no one can doubt. Jesus, in his parables and discourses, continually speaks of God's forgiving the sinner, and of the conditions of that forgiveness. In the book of Acts, forgiveness, pardon, mercy, are the blessings especially offered to those who embrace Christianity. The discussions in the Epistles often relate to the nature and conditions of reconciliation and justification. But there are several difficulties connected with the subject, one of which I wish briefly to state and examine.

And certainly, of all the questions which can occupy us, none are more practical than those which concern the nature, conditions and results of forgiveness. One result of forgiveness is "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Without this peace there can be no strength for the performance of duty, no fortitude to endure trial. With it, all labor is easy, all suffering light. It is of the utmost importance then that we should understand the subject as well as reflection and the teachings of the Scriptures will permit us.

Passing by many of the important and interesting questions which suggest themselves, I wish to ask how we can reconcile what the Scripture declares concerning FORGIVENESS with what it teaches concerning RETRIBUTION.

The New Testament teaches that sin may be forgiven, and yet it also teaches that all sin will be punished. How can a sin be forgiven and yet be punished also?

This appears to me to be a real difficulty, although it is one which theologians have not much troubled themselves with. The Orthodox generally believe that all whose sins are forgiven will go to enjoy unalloyed happiness in heaven. They believe that all the converted and truly regenerate will enter, after death, into an everlasting state of rest and joy. But according to this view, though the idea of forgiveness is retained, that of

retribution is abandoned. The regenerate will be none the worse in the future life for their sins committed here. But what then becomes of the doctrine of the New Testament concerning retribution, which teaches that *every man* is to be rewarded according to *his works* (Matthew xv. 27), is to give an account of every idle word (Matthew xii. 36), is to be rewarded in the proportion of his deserts (Luke xix. 12—21), in which all are to be judged out of the things written in the books according to their works (Revelation xx. 13), and which declares that as a man soweth, so shall he reap?

Rationalists on the contrary, and among them many Unitarians, have retained the strict notion of retribution, and asserted that every man good or bad, will be rewarded and punished in the other life in exact proportion to his conduct here; that even the best man in the future world will be worse off for every sin committed in the present. But according to this view, though the idea of retribution is retained, that of forgiveness is abandoned. If forgiveness does not remove the consequences of sin, but the full penalty is to be always paid, what is meant by the passages in the New Testament which teach that our sins will be blotted out, and that we may be justified by faith (Acts iii. 19; Romans v. 1), that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Romans viii. 1), that through Christ is preached forgiveness of sins (Acts xiii. 38, 39), and justification from that which the law could not justify?

The doctrine of the New Testament evidently is, that there is to be a future judgment in which every act of this life, right or wrong, will be seen to have everlasting consequences, and yet that there is forgiveness to be obtained now by which the evil consequences of sin will be removed.

In what way may these two views be reconciled?

It seems to me, thus. Every act of sin has a twofold evil consequence: it estranges us from God, and it depraves our moral nature. The first consequence of sin is called in the New Testament "wrath," the second, "death." The first is a conviction produced in the soul that God is displeased with us, an inward consciousness that his holiness is offended and

alienated, which consciousness causes us to be alienated from God. The "wrath of God abides" on us, whenever we consciously transgress his commandments. This may be called the *inward* consequence of sin. The other is the *outward* consequence, or that decay and weakness of the soul, or death of the moral nature, that lowers our position in the outward universe. In the parable of the prodigal son, the first of these consequences is indicated by his going "into a far country," and the second by his "wasting his substance in riotous living."

Now I believe that forgiveness removes directly the first of these consequences, or the wrath of God. The moment we are forgiven, we have an assurance in our souls of God's love; we are at one with him. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second of these consequences is not taken away by forgiveness. Our character, our moral nature, which has been depraved by sin, is not immediately or directly restored to its health and purity. It has to endure the consequences it has entailed on itself. It may indeed by new efforts and struggles acquire new strength and life, and work out its salvation from outward evil, but in eternity it will be seen that every act of sin has lowered the position of the soul, and deprived it of a portion of strength which it would otherwise have possessed.

The parable of the prodigal son confirms this view of forgiveness. The forgiven son was restored to his father's heart and arms, but we do not read that the property he had wasted was given to him again.

Forgiveness then means reconciliation to God. Those who are at one with God, are and must be happy, and yet in the other world their outward position in relation to God's other creatures and his universe will be lower in consequence of every sin which they may have committed. Those however who have not repented and have not been forgiven, will be not only lower in their position, but will also have to endure the sense of God's wrath, and the outer darkness of the impenitent heart.

The retributions of sin in the other world to the penitent are then merely negative, consisting in a loss of some spiritual

power; to the impenitent they are both negative and positive, being the loss of power, and the sense of inward desolation which belongs to the soul which is without God.

If this view, thus hastily and imperfectly developed, be true, we have always an encouragement to repent, and yet with it the strongest discouragement to sin. We may feel that there is forgiveness for us if we repent and believe, real and of infinite value; and yet we must also feel that there is an inevitable retribution impending over every sinful thought and action.

J. F. C.

A VISIT TO CANADA.

HAVING passed over the broad Lake Ontario, we entered the river St. Lawrence early in the morning, and were soon winding our way through the lake of the thousand isles,

"Those islands, which together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds."

When these are passed, the noble river rolls majestically along, through quiet and lovely scenery, with now and then a mountain lifting its head in the blue distance. The rapids of the St. Lawrence had long been associated in our minds with the words of "the Canadian boat song," in which Moore sweetly celebrates them; but "when the rapids were near," we felt somewhat disappointed. However, the passage down "the Long Sault," as it is called, quite equalled our expectations. The descent of the river is here very perceptible, the rapids very boisterous, and the current fearfully strong. Our good boat, "the Highlander," with four men at the tiller, and four at the wheel to guide her, darted over the waters at the rate of twenty miles an hour, following the sharp bendings of the river with an air of great intelligence. It is only within a very few years that the passage of "the Long Sault" has been attempted by the larger steamboats, but from the admirable manner

in which our boat was managed there appeared to be no risk in navigation. We occasionally saw the Indian wigwam, on the banks of the river, and at times an Indian canoe, paddled by women, came out upon the stream, the faded remnants of a race who once owned these fair lands and broad waters. It is said that the meaning of the word Canada, in the Indian language, is "the land of the falling waters," which is certainly both poetical and descriptive.

Quebec and Montreal contain much to arrest the attention of a traveller from the United States. Quebec, standing on her proud height, with her strong citadel, high walls, bristling cannon, and red-coated soldiery, displays a new scene to untravelled eyes, while the old French town, its narrow dark streets, its high houses, with their strange, peaked roofs, and foreign-looking inhabitants, presents as strong a contrast as possible to a New England settlement.

We made the usual pilgrimage to the Plains of Abraham, and stood, as thousands have done, beside the spot where Wolfe fell. We have yet to learn, perhaps, that, in many a quiet home, and amid unnoticed scenes, men and women too, are laying down their lives, with as true a spirit of self-sacrifice as he, who, when told on that spot (after having received his death-wound) that the French fled, exclaimed, "Then I die contented."

While visiting the citadel, one of the soldiers showed us with much pride the royal banner of England, which was unfurled in honor of the anniversary of the Queen's coronation. It was the first time we had ever stood beneath her Majesty's banner, and this particular specimen had evidently "braved the battle and the breeze" for many a year. It is said that the sun never sets on the British dominions, and amid the various climes where the English flag is unfurled, it can float above few scenes more beautiful than that upon which it looks down from the citadel of Quebec.

Montreal is far more bustling and active than Quebec; and we happened to visit the city at the moment when it put on its gala dress to receive the governor, Sir Charles Met-

calfe, the seat of government having been recently removed from Kingston to Montreal.

There was one place which interested us more than any other, in Montreal, and that was the humble apartment where, like the early Christians, the small Unitarian congregation were gathered together. The walls of their pretty church are however now rising, and with the aid which it has been the privilege of their brethren in the East to send them, the building will soon be completed. The Rev. Mr. Cordner's society, though yet small, will then be much increased, and in that small number there are now men, whose devotion to the cause of truth, and ability to support it, are like Peter the apostle, rocks, upon which the spiritual church will be firmly built. The Unitarian church in Montreal will have wide influences, for many of our faith are scattered through Canada, to whom the privilege of hearing any preaching consonant with their views is a blessing almost unknown. Many were educated as Unitarians in England and Ireland, and, removed to Canada, they cling firmly to their views of the Gospel, notwithstanding the disadvantage of having no church to draw them together, and amid the bigotry and uncharitableness by which they are surrounded :—bigotry and uncharitableness, which, alas, are all over the world, sad proofs how much more the letter than the spirit of the Gospel has been diffused.

After the simple services at the Unitarian chapel were concluded, we walked to the Catholic cathedral, which is the most imposing building of the kind in America. As we were entering the cathedral, the regiment of Highlanders passed, on their way to the Scotch church ; they were in full uniform, kilts, tartans and feathers, but without music, and each carried in his hand a small Bible. They are a noble-looking band of men, and in their romantic dress make a fine appearance. Having just quitted our own most simple form of worship, and leaving the Highlanders to proceed on their way to listen to the old doctrines of the Scottish kirk, we entered the cathedral, to see another form in which the Christian religion is presented. The interior of the church is by no means equal to the exterior,

and we were told that the architect actually died of a broken heart from not being allowed to finish the interior according to his original plan ;—it may be true ; men have died in a less worthy cause. A number of priests in showy raiment were chanting before the altar in a very unmusical manner. Every thing around us afforded a striking contrast to the meeting we had just left, as great indeed as the difference between the views of the Christian religion presented in the two places of worship.

We were present the next day at a more imposing ceremony, at the cathedral, than the Sunday services exhibit. It was the day of St. John the Baptist, who is, we believe, the patron-saint of Montreal. The priests wore on this occasion very splendid robes, and chanted more unintelligibly than ever. There were about six thousand persons present, the church being able to contain ten thousand, and from every rank of life. In the centre of the broad aisle stood what appeared to be a very tall erection of cake decorated with sugar ornaments, rows of lighted candles, and ribbons, the whole thing being ten or twelve feet high, and mounted on wooden rollers. When the service was about half over, the crowd was dispersed to a proper distance, and the aisle cleared. Monsieur V., the president of the council, (near in rank to the governor,) a very gentlemanly looking Frenchman, with gray hair, and an order in his button-hole, came forward, leading Madame B., the lady of the mayor of Montreal, who held in her hand a lighted taper. Two gentlemen joined them, and holding the long ribbons attached to the gingerbread castle, it was rolled up by their attendants to the altar, where it was presented to the priest by the lady and gentlemen. The priests sprinkled the gift with holy water, and it was then rolled to the side of the altar, taken to pieces, and carried out of sight. This was called the presentation of the sacred bread, presented to the priests in honor of the saint, and afterwards, we believe, distributed among the people, but we did not see that part of the ceremony. The priests of the seminary, as they are called, who officiate at the cathedral, are immensely rich, being in

fact the lords of the soil, and to whom large tributes are paid by those who reside on their land. Their country residence, called "the priests' garden," is a fertile and lovely spot, situated on the side of the mountain, and commanding one of the fairest prospects that can gladden the eye.

We were allowed to see the robes belonging to these priests, which are arranged with great care in a room adjoining the cathedral. These dresses, from the celebrated manufactories of Lyons, are splendid specimens of that department of art. The satins, velvets, and golden tissues of which they are composed, and the exquisite embroideries with which they are ornamented, can scarcely be surpassed by even a royal wardrobe. These dresses are only worn on great occasions, and some of them but once a year. In these magnificent robes do the men array themselves who profess to be the true representatives of the apostles—the humble fishermen of Galilee, and the followers of him who when on earth, had not where to lay his head, and who bade his disciples take no thought wherewithal they should be clothed! Well may those who wander so far from the precept, be unwilling that the book which contains it, should have free circulation among their people.

Nowhere in America, we suppose, is Catholicism so powerful as in Canada, and though we may not think that all the influences of that church are evil, nor that it is the only denomination which holds doctrines far removed from the simple truth of Christianity, yet many of her ceremonies, and much of her superstition, are most repugnant to our minds.

We profess, more than any other denomination of Christians, to go back to the apostolic simplicity of faith, to abjure creeds, and take the Bible alone for our guide. How steadfastly then should we labor for the diffusion of our views of Christ and his mission! Views which, like the clear light of the early morning, rising in the east, will gradually dispel the darkness of error and the mists of superstition, until the beams thereof enlighten every land with a glory that groweth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

A.

CONSOLATIONS IN THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.

A SERMON, BY REV. NATHANIEL HALL.

2 KINGS iv. 25, 26. And it came to pass when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunamite : run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee ? is it well with thy husband ? is it well with the child ? And she answered, It is well.

THE child was dead. It was her only child. It was the child of her advanced years ; the object of warmest affection, of fondest hope ; in the morning with the reapers in the fields, sporting in the rosy brightness of his fifth autumn ; at noon, pale and breathless in his mother's lap—made kindred with the autumn leaves, though by a fate unheralded like theirs. And yet, that mother's calm reply to the inquiry concerning him—made while yet her grief was in all its freshness ; while yet the vacant statue of her cherub-child was lying, uncoffined, in her house—her reply to the inquiry, “Is it well with the child ?” was simply this, “It is well.”

The state of mind which prompted to this reply is not expressly made known to us. But by what we can learn from the narrative concerning her, as well as from the nature of the reply itself, we are led to regard it as the expression of a devout and reverential trust. ‘It is well. He is gone from me—the light of my dwelling, the star of my pathway. No more shall I look upon that beaming countenance, no more listen to that artless prattle, no more receive that loving embrace. No more shall I fold him to his nightly rest, nor be awakened by the music of his morning glee. O beautiful even in death ! How can I part with thee ! How yield thee to that dark, cold bed, thou who hast laid upon my bosom and been cradled in my arms ! How can I part with thee, thou in whose life my own has been renewed ; thou who hast led me, by thy own sweet innocence, to the paths of a holier virtue ! And yet, it is well. So does my faith assure me, so would my heart believe. It cannot but be well. The God of Israel is a Parent-

King. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. He has taken but what He gave. I bless Him for the gift so long enjoyed. *He* has taken it. Whither, I know not. Oh, for but a whisper from that awaiting grave, from those rolling heavens, to tell me whither! Vain heart! It cannot be. Enough, enough for present knowledge, that my child, wherever he be, is within the encircling presence of the Great Jehovah; yea, in the embrace of the same Love that gave him to my arms, that watched and fed the just-enkindled spark, that bore him on his gambols and led him to his rest and made his life one throb of happiness. I can trust him there. What is the love that fills this breaking heart to His from whom it came? Shall the stream distrust the Fountain? Can the wandering ray be brighter than its Orb? Yes, it is well with the *child*; and for myself—in that same kind keeping do I too live. The God of *my* childhood is the God of my maturer life, and will be, until that life has ceased on earth, to be renewed in the kingdom that is eternal.'

It may be that I have thus ascribed to this Israelitish woman a sentiment too elevated and spiritual. Judaism, it may be, could not have inspired such. The question I care not now to discuss. Thank God, it is a sentiment which Christianity *does* inspire. To that query, ever rising in the parental heart as it bids adieu to the object of its affections, 'Is it well with the child?' how strong, how full, how confident, the response of a Christian faith, 'It *is* well.' Oh, pity for the hearts, wheresoever they may be, who, in the bitterness of the parting hour, bending above the shrouded form and the closing grave, put forth the doubting interrogation, and hear no answer! Drear enough, at best, the visitation which snatches from a parent's bosom a cherished child. Death is commissioned to no crueler work. But how dreadful, when the bleeding bosom has no faith to utter, 'It is *well* with the child'!

I have said that the response of Christianity was strong and confident on this point. And yet, as we all know, there are creeds professedly derived from this revelation, whose answer is more than doubtful to the inquiry concerning the child's

well-being in the future world. They tell us he is a creature utterly depraved, born in sin ; that, as such, he is under God's wrath and curse ; and that, save by the merits of Christ's atonement, arbitrarily applied and therefore *to whom* we cannot know, under that wrath and curse he must abide. They tell us, or those who embrace those creeds have so far sunk their humanity in their religion as to tell us, that to the place of endless woe are multitudes consigned of these fair and lovely beings. A view so revolting and barbarous is no longer, indeed, directly taught, even by those who must accept it or be false to other views which they continue to profess. The doctrine is part and parcel of a system. If it be disowned, let the system be disowned—as I bless God it is fast coming to be—from which it is legitimately to be drawn.

Strange that such a doctrine should ever have been named as Christian, when Christianity is so eminently distinguished from all other religions by the marked consideration and respect which it pays to childhood, by the attitude of smiling benediction it assumes towards it, and the tone of sacred tenderness with which it assures us of its acceptance before God. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." These are the declarations of Jesus. Sacred, precious words ! never will we surrender them. We will hold them from the grasp of the system-maker. They are not his. They belong to the heart. They were spoken to the heart. They answer its longing hope. They echo its native belief. They break into the silence of that darkened chamber where the weeping mother attires her babe for its unwaking slumber and impresses the last kiss upon its icy brow. Like the serenade of angels do they fall upon her heart, and she leaves her child as at the gate of heaven. Blessed Jesus ! not only do we hear from him those words of thrilling sweetness ; but we see him in the fulness of his affection, taking to his arms the little ones of whom he spake, and blessing them ; and when his followers, judging they were

too insignificant for his regard, would have hindered their approach, and repulsed the eager hearts that bore them, in gentle accents he welcomed them to his presence—"Suffer little children to come to me and forbid them not." The *text* may be perverted to suit the ends of theologians; but *there stands the commentary*, in the unequivocal language of nature, manifest to the world. Jesus blessing little children,—the picture is hung in the inmost chamber of every Christian parent's heart; nor change, nor death can take it.

"It is well" with the child. Our religion assures it to us in other terms than those more explicit ones we have considered. In revealing so clearly what God is, and what the child is, Christianity enables us to repeat the words of the Hebrew mother in a stronger faith than could ever have been hers. Think of what God is—the Christian's God: a Being of infinite benignity, who creates but to bless, who manifests Himself continually to the end that he may communicate happiness; the great Parent of universal nature, who has fashioned every shape of beauty, who has tuned every note of melody, who has inspired every throb of joy; the Parent, in a dearer sense, to his human family; who watches over them with an intensity of love, incomprehensible in its degree, measureless in its duration; who regards each individual of that unnumbered multitude who throng the homes of men with a particularity of care as great, as constant, as if he were the only one. Such a being is the God of Christianity. And is it with hearts doubtful of their welfare that we resign our children at His bidding? Wrapped have they not been here in His love's own mantle? and when He takes them will it fall? Hearts to love and hands to bless has He not commissioned to stand around them at every moment of their earthly stay? and has He no ministering angels where they go? O parent bereaved! by that tide of love within thee that began its course when first thy child was placed within thy arms, to cease not when the hand of death had stricken him—nor then, nor ever; by that might of love which made thee more than willing for all sacrifice, so might its object prosper; that has led thee to outwatch the stars by his bed of pain, and forget the cravings

of nature in thy care for him ;—by that love believe it, that the Father of all spirits and the Source of all their love, will not fail to care for and to bless that dear departed child ;—dear to thyself, but more dear to Him ; departed from earth, but entered within a more genial clime. Thy child is in the hands of God. Then *must* it not be well with him ?—Think of what the child is, and is made to be ;—not a creature of time, to wither with its emblem-flowers—emblems only of its earthly fate ; not an animal, with faculties limited to the providing for the body's poor necessities ; but a spirit, bearing the germ of an angel's powers, and called into being that it may be expanded to an angel's stature. Will not God see to the fulfilment of his own designs ? Yes, and by taking that child he would better fulfil them than he could on earth. He would place it where it can grow in purer beauty and stronger goodness and to a larger life. Blessed thought ! Its dwelling-place is above the mists of error and the shafts of evil. It lives with God. There is nought to intercept from it the beamings of his smile—no throes of passion, no desires of sin. Its fellowship is with the good and holy. It shall walk with them the heavenly fields, and share in their ministrations of mercy. It has no hindrances to its progress, nothing to unlearn, nothing to disturb the harmonies of its being ;—

“ No sin to cloud, no lure to stay
The soul, as on it springs ;
God’s sunshine on its joyful way,
Heaven’s freedom on its wings.”

It lives ; and its affections live for those who gave it being and watched above it while it tarried here with so tender care. It lives to bless them. Who shall say it does not hover over their daily paths, and shed down softening influence on their hearts ? Who shall say the yearnings after a purer goodness which sometimes visit them, are not the unconscious answer to its call ?

And it lives to meet them. Think not, parent, it is lost to thee ! The child that went from thee in its cherub-loveliness thou shalt find again—as God is good, as God is true. But not in the weakness of its earthly day ; not as thou sawest it

when it yielded up its sweet life upon thy bosom ; not as thou leftest it in the grave ; but free and glorified and happy ; filled and glowing with the love of God ; bright in the radiance of a celestial goodness ; beaming upon thee a heavenly smile, and waiting to exchange with thee the fond embrace. Shall not the thought be powerful to urge thee forward on the paths of purity, if, happily, thou hast already chosen them ?—shall it not urge thee to the culture of all good affections, all holy principles—shall it not urge thee, in a word, to endeavor to secure for thyself a fitness for companionship with that heavenly throng of which thy child is one ?

POLYCARP.

TRANSLATED FROM HERDER.

HE is a noble hero, who for home,
A nobler he, who for his country's good,
The noblest, who for human kind, doth fight.
A high-priest, he their fate bears in his heart,
And on his breast the plate of truth. He stands
Upon the battle-field, the enemy
Of superstition and of luxury,
Of error and of flattery the foe,
And falls, true to the highest majesty,—
An honest conscience, which declares to him,
He must not seek, and must not fly from death.

“ Why do ye kill the members ? ” (cried the rage
Of the heathen rabble) ; “ seek and slay the head.”

They seek the pious Polycarpus, him,
John's image and disciple. Zealous friends
Had in the country found a refuge for him.

“ I saw this night the pillow 'neath my head
All in a glow”—so spake the sick old man ;—
“ And with a transport of delight awaked.
Vain is the labor of your love ; it is
For me to glorify my God by death.”

Then all the house resounded with the cries
Of boisterous men in search of him. Kindly
The saint received them, and he said—“ Prepare,
(There is time yet), these weary men a meal.

Meanwhile I too prepare me for my journey.”
He went and prayed ; and with much suffering,
(So old he was), he followed to the consul.

When to the judgment-seat he came, a voice
Within his breast cried mightily ; “ Be brave,
O Polycarp.”

The consul saw the calm,
The beautiful, the gentle patriarch,
With wonder. “ Spare,” he said, “ thy hoary head,
Deny thy God, and here make sacrifice.”

“ O how can I deny a Master, whom
My life long I have served, and who to me
My life long has done good?”

“ And fear’st thou not
The lion’s tooth ?”

“ The grain of wheat must first
Be broken, howsoe’er it may, to bring
The future fruit to birth.”

The rabble cried,
“ Away with him ! He is the Christians’ father !
Fire ! Fire !”—They bring together fagots, and
Seize on him madly.

“ Friends,” he said, “ there is
No need of bonds for me. He, who did deem
Me worthy of this flame, will give me courage.”
And calmly he laid down his cloak, and loosed
The sandals from his feet, and mounted so
His funeral pile.

Upon a sudden shot
The flame on high, and waved around him, like
A sail, that cooled him ;—as a shining vault,
That held the precious jewel in its midst,
And gloriously illuminated it, until,
Enraged, a daring hand transfixed his heart. .
He sank ; his blood flowed out ; the flame was quenched !
And a white dove flew up.

Dost laugh at the white dove ? When thou art dying,
Must then a vulture’s beak thy bosom rend ?
Or dead, a raven pluck thine eye out ? Or
Must asp or salamander crawl from out
Thine ashes ? Do not scorn the symbol, which
The legend yields :—A sinless, single soul
Alone gives courage in the hour of death.

H. W. T.

THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST JESUS.

THE mind of Christ shone out so clearly that few can mistake it. During the progress of his mission, there might indeed have been much which an observer would find it at first difficult to account for. He stood alone, and not even his nearest disciple understood him. His course was thought strange and unnecessary. But when, after the period in which he seemed to wrap up in mystery the reasons of his course, the whole drama of his life was finished, then the objects of his pursuit, and the directness of his aims, shone forth clear as the sun. The mystery all vanished. To us, who look back on the whole at once, those events are like the light and shade in a picture, in which there is the softest beauty mingled with the grand and sublime ; and but for the very shading, we could not so well discern the real features of the Son of God.

Two traits of the character of Christ, his humility and his obedience, are set forth by an apostle for our imitation, in language the following—" Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, . . . made himself of no reputation and became obedient even unto the death of the cross."

Christ was "in the form of God," as he was "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." The "form of God" is, moreover, the perfections, which are disclosed to us. It pleased the Father that Jesus should be made the manifestation of more of the divine power, and more of the divine wisdom, than had ever been imparted to any other. The chief perfection of God is that "God is love." More divine love shines in the face of Jesus, in his words and works, than in any other of the sons of God. Here he appears most conspicuously "the Son of God," "the radiation of the Father's glory, and the exact image of his substance."

Christ was in God's form when he healed the sick, and multiplied the loaves and fishes, and changed the water into

wine, and raised the dead, and forgave sin, all in God his Father's name. He was in God's form when he lifted up his benevolent face on sinful, repenting man and woman, in divine compassion and love; when he spake God's truth, in all its fulness and purity, with the voice of authority as with the voice of God. He was in God's form in the divine glory which attended his steps. The glory of the Lord shone round the manger where he was born, was poured down from heaven upon him by the Jordan's river-side, overshadowed him on the mount of transfiguration, lighted up his cross and his tomb. It was a glory in which he stood arrayed, while he himself thus arrayed was an object of wonder to others. He was at home in it. He stood in the midst of it, as the Apocalyptic angel in the sun.

Such was Christ in God's form. The Scripture does not say that he was "very God." The phraseology itself—"in the *form*"—shows that the apostle meant to contrast it with the *substance*, so to speak, of God. In the form of God Christ was, he was God's vicegerent, but not really and substantially God. This the apostle most conclusively teaches. And the significancy is in its application to his condition during his sojourn upon the earth.

The description of Christ, as it is in our English version, is thus continued—"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In explanation of this clause, Professor Stuart remarks, in his Letters to Dr. Channing, that "Our version seems to render nugatory, or at least irrelevant, a part of the apostle's reasoning in the passage. He is enforcing the principle of Christian humility, upon the Philippians. But how was it any proof or example of humility, that *he did not think it robbery to be equal with God?* Besides, the word translated *robbery* does not seem here to signify *an act of robbery*, but rather something that is eagerly to be seized and appropriated. Literally it is, He regarded not the being equal to God as a thing to be greedily sought or appropriated." Such is the candid acknowledgment of this eminent scholar, and it is no more candid than just.

There is a profound significance in the whole application of this language to the period of our Lord's ministry on earth. Arrayed and imbued with divine power and wisdom, how did he demean himself? Did he put on airs, like the mighty men of the world? Did he not disclaim being able to do anything of himself? Did he not, so far from seeking his own glory, seek the glory of him that sent him? When the Jews reproached him with making himself God, did he not expressly renounce any other title than the Son of God? Nay, did he not, in the very temper of humility, ever speak of himself not so much as the Son of God, as the Son of man? Was it not his one great aim, to bring forth the Father—his Father and our Father, his God and ours—to the love, and obedience, and homage of men? He performed a good work, and retired from observation, that men might dwell not so much on him the instrument, as on God who wrought by him. He sought not to be seen himself, but to have the Father all in all. The more we contemplate Christ, and hear him speak, and behold his works, the more do we also see and hear the Father who sent him; and Christ, as the Son of God, seems to be hid in God. Christ is the mediator to bring us to God, that God may be all in all to us. And it is the glory of Christ, that he will make God all in all. Not that Christ will ever cease to be precious to us. But as when a true minister of Christ sinks himself in Christ, is hid in his subject, and yet is himself the man dear and venerated, for the very reason that he preaches not himself but Christ, and enables us to see the beauty and majesty of truth;—so Christ preaches God who sent him; is himself absorbed in the truth he presents, and we become absorbed in it with him. He is hid in God, and “our life is also hid with Christ in God,” while Jesus himself becomes unspeakably more dear, and more the object of our veneration, for the very reason that he shews us the Father. If there is any distinguishing trait, therefore, in him who was “in the form of God,” it is that “he regarded not the being equal to God as a thing to be greedily sought or appropriated.”

So far from entertaining such a sentiment, he on the con-

trary, as the apostle goes on to say, "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Of no reputation his countrymen literally regarded him. "We know this man whence he is," say they. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" They took him for "a mere common man," as the world says. He ate and drank with common men. He assumed not the state nor privileges of a teacher and master, but declared that he was "among them as one that serveth." He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, rather than, as the kings of this world are wont to do, preserve his own at the sacrifice of many others. He possessed no silver or gold, no estates, save only the riches of goodness and compassion. He exercised his power not for himself, but for the benefit and happiness of others. Such was his outward form and condition, when he might have put on kingly pomp and power. Such was he in outward form, but he was not one whit less a Prince. As when Peter the Great worked in Amsterdam and Saardam, where he appeared in the common people's dress, and caused himself to be enrolled among the workmen in the shipyard, and for weeks lived in a humble cot, and prepared his own food, but was nevertheless not less the Emperor of Russia, than when he sat in his palace on the throne, so, only with greater self-sacrifice, and for nobler ends, Messiah the Prince "came to his own, and his own received him not." But within that lowly form there dwelt the majesty of heaven. On that expansive brow, and in that expressive eye, there could be read the soul of divinity itself. From those lips dropped divine wisdom as the dew, to the wonder of those who knew him not. He ever seemed, not indeed above his condition, for that denotes a trait in vain to be looked for in Jesus ; but he did ever seem superior to his condition. He seemed fit to rule the world, though he only served. As on the mount, his humble form was suddenly transfigured into the glory of the heavenly, and there appeared

also Moses and Elias, the two great prophets of the Jewish nation, conferring with him,—so the spiritual eye can always see Jesus in real glory in his meanest outward condition. So even while the mob were pursuing him with shouts of derision to Calvary, and transfixed on the cross he exclaimed, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” at that very time can the spiritually-minded clearly “see the heaven open, and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” The soldiers sent forth to seize him were awe-struck with the greatness visible beneath his lowly form, and, returning with their commission unfulfilled, declared that “never man spake like this man.” In that dark hour when on Calvary he expired, and his own followers had all relinquished their hopes, and Jewish malice seemed triumphant, and the claims of Jesus utterly refuted, there were two who saw beneath all his ignominy, and all his woe, the truth of his claims, and the divine glory of his character. One of these was a thief crucified with him, who said, “Lord, remember thou me, when thou comest to thy kingdom”: the other a heathen commander of a band of soldiers, who, while the cries of malice and contempt had not died away from among the crowd, exclaimed, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

From the character of Christ, what an exhortation addresses men to be likewise humble and obedient. Seek to be the servants of God, in all holiness and usefulness—the office not of being ministered unto, but of ministering to others. Covet not the distinctions of wealth, nor the honors of worldly greatness. Seek, more than all, moral greatness, the durable riches of righteousness. Live not to yourselves, doing little or nothing for the benefit of others. Expect not, desire not, others to minister to you, so much as yourselves to minister to others. Though rich and great, yet be among men “as one that serveth.” This is the true path to distinction. “Before honor is humility.” So Jesus having lived and died not to himself, but to mankind, “God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name.” If in the midst of his humiliation he was in the form of God, how much more now! The lowly ap-

pendages of that earthly condition no more hang around and obscure him. He is transfigured, never more to return to his obscure state here below. And in the spiritual dominion which he exercises, the spread of the knowledge of his truth and character and works, he will become more and more widely seen and known on earth, until the Nazarene teacher, the sufferer on Calvary, Jesus the Christ, shall be a name revered in all lands, shall receive the homage of all; and in the redemption effected by his Gospel, in the conquest of his love over all forms of sin, in the meliorating influences of his spirit in a world hitherto a world of sorrow, he shall be acknowledged as "Lord" and Savior of the world, "to the" higher "glory of God the Father" who sent him. We too, "if we suffer with him" in the same path of self-denial and well-doing, "shall also reign with him."

N. S. F.

THE FUTURE'S SECRET.

BLOOMING Spring,

Seed-time and harvest, all are passed away,
And Winter reigns once more. And thus our lives
Steal softly on, and hour succeeds to hour,
And day still ushers day so silently,
We scarce are conscious of the flight of time.

'Tis well it should be so. The spirit shrinks
To think what dread events a year may bring,
And almost fears to tread the onward way
And meet the mysteries in the future hid.
Yet, in the beautiful design of Heaven,
The current of our lives so gently flows,
Each little moment with another linked,
And one event another heralding,
We are beguiled to tread life's devious path
With cheerful steps, and spirits undismayed.

M.

INTELLIGENCE.

ORDINATION AT LEOMINSTER, MASS.—On Wednesday, December 25, 1844, Mr. Hiram Withington, of the last class graduated from the Cambridge Divinity School, was ordained as Minister of the First Congregational Church and Society in Leominster. The services were in the following order:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Sears of Lancaster; Selections from Scripture, by Rev. Mr. Willson of Grafton; Sermon, by Rev. Mr. Hall of Dorchester; Prayer of Ordination, by Rev. Mr. Lincoln of Fitchburg; Charge, by Rev. Mr. Putnam of Roxbury; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. J. H. Allen of Jamaica Plain; Address to the Society, by Rev. J. Allen of Northboro'; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Huntington of Boston.

The sermon, from the text, Mark xvi. 15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” was a discussion of the nature, foundation, position and claims of the Christian ministry, its peculiar and appointed work and instrument. The preacher first referred to the origin of the ministry—how simple and unforced. It could hardly be said to have been “instituted.” It grew up naturally. It had the reason of necessity for its existence, and this, in the constraining force of faith and love, within the hearts of Christian disciples. Here was, and is, the call and the commission to its work. In these are found the highest authority and empowerment thereto, and the holiest consecration. The ministry has its grounds of permanency in the spiritual wants of man, and the power of Gospel truth alone to meet them. It is not dependent for existence upon its preparatory institutions or initiatory rites, or anything external. It does not live in the persons of its functionaries, or the use of certain forms and modes of operation. To put down these were not to abolish the ministry. The ministry as an institution is indestructible, for it is the answer to a deep call of humanity. And hence the claims of the ministry to favor and support. They are in the dignity, the importance, the exalted and ever-enduring utility of its work. It asks no alms of an indulgent public. It takes to itself, and with highest reason, that proverb applied to it by its Divine Founder, “The laborer is worthy of his hire.”—The preacher then considered the question how the position of the ministry was affected by the multiplied and increasing facilities for obtaining the instruction of which it was once the almost solitary medium. These could not supersede its necessity, inasmuch as holy living, the great end and object of religious truth, does not necessarily follow from the possession of that truth. Amid all the

boasted light and progress of the age, men are needing everywhere to be called to the baptism of repentance and regeneration ; to have a quickening power communicated to accepted and familiar truths, and the Gospel's eternal sanctions laid home to their hearts and consciences. There are other means of doing this, certainly, than the preaching of the pulpit, and all, in their way, valuable and important. But it is this, chiefly, it is the preaching of the Sabbath and the sanctuary, by which Christianity has done its work in the world, and through this have its other means and instrumentalities received, as they must retain, their activity and life. But however various the form and mode of action the ministry may adopt under its great commission to "*preach*," there is a definiteness in respect to the *instrument* of its work—*what it is to preach*. It is the *Gospel*, not human theories, not metaphysical abstractions, not mere natural religion ; but the *Gospel* of Christ. The *Gospel* in its entireness—not its morality merely, but also its disclosures of spiritual facts—and these as having had a supernatural attestation. The *Gospel* in its freeness and largeness—not bound and compressed within the poor dimensions of a creed. The *Gospel* in its adaptation to existing wants and conditions and evils. The *Gospel* of a kingdom whose coming and power is to be looked and sought for *here* and *now*—in men's communities and homes and hearts.—The relation of the ministry to the moral-reform movements of the day was then considered ; and it was urged that while it should give them, openly and heartily, its countenance and support, so far as they were true to the principles and spirit of the *Gospel*, it had a different sphere from them and a higher one, and that by faithfully abiding therein it could far better serve the professed ends of these enterprises than by occupying their peculiar field or entering into their excited and often unhallowed action. The discourse concluded with an elevated view of what the ministry might effect if true to its work and instrument, and the people true to it.

In the evening, after a discourse adapted to the day, which was Christmas, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered. The custom of observing Christmas by religious worship appears to be gaining ground in our denomination, in all directions.

ORDINATION OF AN EVANGELIST.—On the 1st of January, 1845, Mr. Herman Snow, a graduate of the Cambridge Theological School, was ordained as an Evangelist, at the Bulfinch Street Church in Boston. The services of the occasion were conducted in the following order :—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Huntington of Boston ; Selections from the Scriptures, by Rev. Mr. Pierpont of Lynn ; Ser-

mon, by Rev. Mr. Clarke of Boston; Prayer of Ordination, by Rev. Mr. Muzzy of Cambridgeport; Charge, by Rev. Mr. Gray of Boston; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Willson of Grafton; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Coolidge of Boston.

The sermon was on the text written in 2 Timothy iv. 5: "Do the work of an evangelist." The inquiry instituted was, What the work of an evangelist is. It is a work that the most ignorant may do honorably, and one in which the most learned may fail. It is first of all, to preach the Gospel. It is not chiefly to preach any *law*, whether of conscience, Moses or Christ. It is not chiefly to set forth commandments, not even the commandments or the example of Christ. It is not to proclaim a doctrine either, whether Orthodox or Liberal. It is not, of course, to prepare two sermons, characterized by a finished and polished style, a brilliant fancy, or original and striking ideas—(though there is no objection to these also)—for the entertainment of an assembly on the Sabbath. It is, on the contrary, to preach the Gospel. And to do that, is to set forth the message and mission of Jesus Christ, as a revelation of divine love; as an offer of mercy and pardon, on condition of repentance and faith; as a means of reconciliation for sinning man, with an offended but loving Father. Man groans under that burden with which guilt always loads the soul. The Gospel opens the way to a deep, abiding, blessed peace. It shows him how he may be rescued, saved, healed. This is the central idea of the Gospel, though there may be various modes of presenting and enforcing it; measures that are old, and measures that are new. But salvation, salvation from sin, salvation now and here and forever, is the essence and the sum of the good tidings of Christ.—Then, as to the source whence the truth to be preached is to be derived: chiefly and primarily from the New Testament. The original fountain is here. Some doubt the inspiration of those books. It would seem as if their inspiration must be rather a matter of sight than of belief. It is visible everywhere in them. There are no other such books. The divine life of their Master dwelt in the writers, and it shines forth through what they wrote. They are the mirror that reflects Christ's life just as it is; his deeds and words, exactly as they were performed and spoken. There are no comments or opinions of their own, thrusting themselves forward. No indignation is expressed at Judas, no compassion for Peter, no rebuke at the cross, no wonder at the resurrection. It is as if the facts wrote themselves. There must be something more than a natural cause at work here. The preacher must have faith in this record. He must follow it with an ancillary patience, as the student follows nature. Tradition may be regarded as a source of truth, too, provided we may make tradition mean Christian history, and include in it the doings and words of the *whole*

Church; *all* the sects as well as the Romish fragment; for any sect that ever existed has signified some want of the soul, and disclosed an effort to meet and satisfy it. The spirit of man, with its inward emotions, is to the preacher a source of truth.—Finally, how is the evangelist to utter his truth? He must utter it as if he loved to utter it; he must be happy in doing it; choose it above all things else. He must feel and believe what he speaks, having a heart of faith. He must preach in a liberal spirit, for the spirit of the Gospel is very large. He may preach anywhere, in parlors, chambers, steamboats, or courthouses, as well as in churches. Poor women may preach thus, as well as educated men. Very likely some will revile the evangelist, and complain of him. Persons who have a favorite theory will call him a dumb dog if he does not give himself altogether to their notion. Let him not care, but preach the Gospel, the broad, deep Gospel; and he may be a useful and happy man.

SUFFOLK STREET CHAPEL MINISTRY.—Rev. J. T. Sargent, who for several years has been engaged in the work of the Ministry at Large as the Pastor of the Suffolk Street Chapel, resigned his office on the first of January, 1845. The causes of this step are fully stated in a pamphlet lately issued by the Fraternity of Churches, by whose support this Ministry is sustained, and in whose service Mr. Sargent was employed. The pamphlet contains a correspondence between Mr. Sargent and the Committee of the Fraternity, and thus embraces the ground taken by both the parties. It is sufficient to state here that the difficulty grew out of an exchange of pulpits between Mr. Sargent and Mr. Theodore Parker of Roxbury, and a refusal on the part of the former gentleman to enter into an agreement, that an exchange with the same individual should not take place again. A temporary provision has been made for the supply of preaching at the Chapel.

PRISON REFORM.—In a late Number of the Monthly the attention of our readers was called to this interesting and philanthropic object. Since that time, on the 6th of December, 1844, a meeting has been called in New York city, and attended by a large body of highly intelligent men and women, for the purpose of promoting some more definite action and more just and Christian sentiment in relation to the whole subject. Among those who strongly and eloquently urged the claims of convicts to a more hearty sympathy, and a more manlike treatment, were John W. Edmonds, Esq., Rev. William H. Channing, Hon. Theodore Sedgwick, Mrs. Rose, and Isaac T. Hopper, Esq., the

venerable Quaker, whose noble and long exertions in behalf of prisoners have become so widely known. The example of Christ, the great Master of the heart, the consoler of sorrow, the compassionate helper of the suffering, the Savior from sin, seems to us to be singularly plain, significant, and always the same. The spirit he breathed, and the spirit of his religion, is throughout a spirit of the gentlest tenderness, and profound, earnest and touching pity; and we can only wonder that Christians have so long treated that most pitiable of all classes of beings, moral offenders, creatures of guilt and shame, with harshness and cold neglect. Let us hail the better day, and rejoice in it.—As the result of the meeting, the following resolutions were passed, the first of which was immediately and promptly acted upon:—

"Resolved, That it is expedient to form in the city of New York, a Prison Association, and that a committee be appointed by the chair to report to this meeting a form of such Association, and a nomination of suitable officers therefor.

"Resolved, That the state and condition of prison discipline, including the treatment which prisoners receive during their confinement, the amelioration of the condition of prisoners, the improvement of the government of our prisons, and the substitution in their management of the law of kindness for that of force, are objects worthy the attention of philanthropists, and deserve the particular consideration of such a Society.

"Resolved, That to sustain and encourage discharged convicts, who give satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation, in their endeavors to lead honest lives, by affording them employment and guarding them against temptation, is demanded of us not only by the interests of society but by every dictate of humanity."

PEACE CONVENTIONS.—It has been agreed to hold a series of Peace Conventions in several towns of Worcester county, Mass., for the purposes of enlightening the mind of the community with regard to the views of the Peace Society, and awakening a more general and decided interest in this important subject. The first of these Conventions assembled in the town of Worcester, December 14th, 1844. It was organized by the choice of Rev. Dr. Bates of Dudley, as President, and Messrs. J. P. Blanchard of Boston, and Elihu Burritt of Worcester, as Secretaries. Spirited addresses were made by two of these gentlemen, as also by Samuel E. Coues, Esq., President of the American Peace Society, Professor Amasa Walker of North Brookfield, Rev. Mr. Peck of Grafton, Rev. Mr. Allen of Northboro', and Rev. Alonzo Hill of Worcester, on the following resolution:

"Resolved, That all war is inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel."

Similar Conventions have since been held in North Brookfield, Springfield, Cabotville, Chicopee, Westfield, and Hartford, Ct.

ITEMS.

THE formation of Temperance Societies in Poland, which was a short time since in rapid progress, has been forbidden by the government. The clergy are prohibited from advocating the cause in the pulpit. Any reasons for this prohibition we have not seen stated.

THERE is no doubt that the vicious practice of betting was carried on to a deplorable extent during the recent Presidential canvass. A friend who happened to be in several of the central cities at the time of the State elections, assures us that, in his travel, he was hardly in any one circle of gentlemen numbering four or five individuals, where there were not instances of such immorality. We have noticed in the papers a single instance of legal prosecution for the offence, at Philadelphia.

THE number of patients who have applied to the Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston for advice during the past year, is 1064.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.—At the monthly meeting of the Board of Managers of this institution, held November 7, 1844, the General Agent reported that the issues of copies of the Holy Scriptures during the month of October had been larger than in any month since the formation of the Society. The number sent out from the Bible house is 77,442, of which 15,326 were Bibles, 32,102 Testaments, and 14 copies of the Scriptures for the blind; the whole valued at \$10,455 39. These Scriptures were in fourteen languages, namely: English, French, German, Spanish, Welsh, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Italian, Polish, Latin, Hebrew, Chinese and Indian.

AT the annual meeting of the Seaman's Aid Society, held in Boston January 14, 1845, reports were presented, showing a very satisfactory and encouraging state of things in reference to this good cause. Interesting addresses were made by Messrs. Sturgis, Fearing and Sheafe, and Rev. Messrs. Taylor, Pierpont, Parkman, and Brooks. The Mariner's Home was referred to as a very useful institution, and liberal measures were taken for the erection of a new building to be devoted to this object. It was agreed, on the part of the Society, to apply to the State legislature for an act of incorporation.—At a recent meeting of the Seaman's Friend Society in Liverpool, we observe, it was stated that a movement had been made, there and elsewhere, for the establishment of libraries for promoting the spiritual improvement of sailors.

IN the Episcopal Theological Seminary at New York, a conspiracy has been detected among some of the students, in favor of Roman Catholicism. The Faculty at once determined to investigate the matter, and bring the delinquents to trial.